

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, Quality education is essential to an informed
3 citizenry, the foundation of our democratic society; and

4 WHEREAS, Access to quality education is the gateway to
5 opportunity, our nation's promise to all; and

6 WHEREAS, Quality education provided in a universal
7 setting enriches the learning experience; and

8 WHEREAS, Quality education for every citizen regardless
9 of race, religion, ethnic background, or economic
10 circumstance is a fundamental goal under our form of
11 government; and

12 WHEREAS, On May 17, 1954, in a historic and unanimous
13 decision, the United States Supreme Court, in *Brown v. Board*
14 of Education, 347 U.S. 483 (1954), ruled that public
15 education is subject to the equal protection provisions of
16 the United States Constitution; and

17 WHEREAS, The Court based its decision as well on the
18 premise that to separate children according to their race was
19 unfair, diminishing their hopes and their futures; and

20 WHEREAS, That decision of May 17, 1954 was the
21 culmination of 58 years of effort by a vast number of
22 persons, organizations, and institutions and of the largely
23 unknown and unheralded efforts of countless early Americans
24 and their descendants aimed at achieving equal justice under
25 the law; and

26 WHEREAS, The Court's pronouncement in *Brown v. Board of*
27 Education validated those remarkable actions and their
28 underlying premise that change in our country is achieved
29 though peaceful, lawful means; and

30 WHEREAS, That participants from all walks of life joined

1 in pursuit of this goal emphasizes that Americans, standing
2 together, can effect great and positive change under the law;
3 and

4 WHEREAS, That decision has had a profound, significant,
5 and beneficial impact on all aspects of life in the United
6 States; and

7 WHEREAS, The significant contributions of citizens of
8 this State were essential to the ultimate success of that
9 58-year effort; and

10 WHEREAS, Those contributions made through lawful and
11 peaceful means stand as worthy models of the benefit of
12 public education and good citizenship; and

13 WHEREAS, The benefits to this State are everywhere to be
14 seen in the contributions by Illinois citizens not only in
15 education but in government, the arts, business, and other
16 civic undertakings; and

17 WHEREAS, The 50th Anniversary of the Brown v. Board of
18 Education decision affords an opportunity for the citizens of
19 this State to celebrate and commemorate our own success in
20 providing quality public education and recognize the fruits
21 of that success; and

22 WHEREAS, May 17, 2004 is the 50th anniversary of this
23 historic event; therefore, be it

24 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL
25 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, THE HOUSE OF
26 REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING HEREIN, that the Illinois
27 Commission on the 50th Anniversary of Brown v. Board of
28 Education is created; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the members of the Commission shall
30 include the President of the Senate or his or her designee

1 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives or his or her
2 designee, each serving as co-chairpersons, the Governor or
3 his or her designee, one vice-chairperson appointed by each
4 of the co-chairpersons, and 25 appointed members, with the
5 Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the
6 House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the Senate,
7 and the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives
8 appointing 5 members each; and be it further

9 RESOLVED, That the appointed members shall be from
10 diverse backgrounds so as to reflect the diverse citizenry of
11 Illinois working together for a common democratic cause, and
12 that their individual qualifications shall include varying
13 educational, professional, and civic experiences that bring
14 different perspectives and cooperative outlooks to the
15 Commission; and be it further

16 RESOLVED, That the purpose of the Commission is (i) to
17 further a statewide appreciation for the advancement of
18 democratic principles through our system of law and justice
19 using the unanimous 1954 Supreme Court decision in Brown v.
20 Board of Education as a touchstone and (ii) to inspire all of
21 our citizens, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, religion,
22 or economic status, to appreciate the value of education and
23 public service as a means to further the objects of
24 democracy; and be it further

25 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall have the following
26 stated objectives: (i) to identify human and documentary
27 resources, generally available, for use by educational,
28 civic, social, and other organizations and institutions such
29 that the Commission may effectively share in the spread of
30 democratic principles as part of the Commission's ongoing
31 activities in 2004; (ii) to encourage direct participation
32 through essays, creative arts, lectures, original research
33 and writing, community projects, and other activities to

1 foster personal commitment to democracy; (iii) to provide
2 adoptable program models for local use statewide; and (iv) to
3 mark the anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education with an
4 appropriate ceremony; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Commission shall, while working in
6 coordination with and with the assistance of Chicago State
7 University and Southern Illinois University at Carbondale's
8 Public Policy Institute, broaden outreach by using
9 established channels, including publicly supported media and
10 electronic, computer-assisted communication systems, and
11 elicit voluntary assistance from educational, legal, civic,
12 and professional organizations and institutions as well as
13 notable individuals; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That no later than June 30, 2005, the
15 Commission shall report to the General Assembly and the
16 Governor on its activities and accomplishments, and that the
17 Commission shall be dissolved after the filing of this
18 report; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
20 delivered to the Governor of the State of Illinois.